[ARCHERS]

553 Schebesta reports that the child is not named for some weeks after birth. To name a boy is the father's prerogative or that of the oldest male members of his lineage; to name a girl is the right of the mother or her oldest relatives. There is no uniform custom, except that naming is primarily the privilege of the parents.

844 846 [114] 847 It is a Pygmy custom to fasten the umbilical cord to the child's elbow and later to bury it in some swamp. Schebesta found no evidence of the truth of Johnston's statement (1902, 1904, 539) that Pygmy women sever the umbilical cord with their teeth. Abortion is known to the Pygmies, but plays no part in marital life.

Twins

• 845 847 The birth of twins, among the archers, seems to be considered abnormal and inauspicious. Schebesta frequently heard that following the birth of twins one had died. He was told by an elder that, when twins are born, the elders are immediately informed, and they advise that if both infants are strong and healthy they be allowed to live, otherwise the weaker of the two should be killed. The mother herself smothers the infant by covering its nose and mouth with her hand. The body is immediately buried in the house, which is promptly abandoned.

[P.178-B]

[ARCHERS]

[P. 178-C]

Dances are organized by the women to celebrate the birth of twins, whether or not both live. Schebesta (1948, 409) mentions the fact that, although the neighboring village tribes have similar feelings about abnormal births, they content themselves with evading unhappy consequences by magical dances and other rites. Schebesta (1948, 409) suggests that superstitious terror and fear of attendant sanctions drive the Pygmy mother to the more violent way of avoiding danger. He writes that all abnormal infants are also put to death immediately following birth, either by the mother or by her female attendants; the men are never permitted to see these monsters. They too are buried in the house, which is immediately abandoned.

845 • [535]

845 847

Postnatal Care

The mother surrounds her child with every care and attention until she again becomes pregnant, and even subsequently if the child is not yet able to look after itself to some extent.

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[ARCHERS]

and may devote his time to his bride. He further alleges that the young couple do not exhibit their affection in public, but that one may conclude from various signs that mutual affection continues even in advanced age. Jealousy, however, often comes into the open, and women are particularly suspicious of their husbands. The usual factors leading to the disruption of a marriage are cited as disagreement over the upbringing of the children, idleness of either party, the disputatious nature of the women, or the irascibility of the men.

Sexual relations are maintained during menstruation; Schebesta mentions the fact that the only restriction is during the final stage of pregnancy and for several months following childbirth. In some regions, he adds, there is also a restriction on sexual intercourse between the husband and any woman following the birth of a child to his wife. Such a statement evidently implies an acceptance of extramarital intercourse in other regions, yet he also claims that adultery is considered as a moral transgression offending the divinity; when committed with a married woman, it is criminal. Some allowance is made for a man who cannot have relations with his wife (as during a period of sex taboo); intercourse with an unmarried woman is then generally not considered as adultery. An itching body and birth of twins are, among some

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P. 182-A]

832 Mbuti, considered as signs that adultery has
[845] taken place. An offended wife has the right to
[827] leave her husband; an offended husband may chastise his wife and attack his rival, possibly leading to a feud between two bands. If he finds his wife *in flagrante delicto*, he has the right to kill her lover. However, Schebesta cites no case histories.

Separation

586 A husband's justification for separation is based on the constant infidelity of the wife, her sterility, her selfishness leading to neglect of her husband, sickness, or suspicion of sorcery. On the woman's side, separation is justified by ill treatment by her husband, neglect of his hunting duties, and his infidelity. Separation is achieved simply by each band's reclaiming the daughter it gave in exchange, or effecting compensation. It does not necessarily involve hostility between the two bands, in which case the children may remain with their father, without their mother's becoming ostracized from the community. Also, a child may remain with its mother, even if she returns to her own band or remarries into another. Only when a child marries is there a necessity to settle the question of its economic allegiance.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

four types of song can be distinguished by its musical form alone, but its performance is not necessarily limited to the appropriate occasion. Thus a *molimo* song may be sung around the campfire in the evening without the *molimo* association's necessarily holding a formal meeting, which would exclude the presence of women. Similarly, honey-gathering songs may be sung well out of honey season. A fifth group, play songs, is associated with children's games and mothers' lullabies.

Singing, dancing, and story telling may continue late into the night unless it is raining. Families retire to their huts as they feel inclined, but throughout the night there is nearly always a small group of men or boys around the main fire, warming themselves or smoking. This is where the bachelors generally sleep.

Conception and Childbirth

The general information given by Schebesta for the archers applies to the net hunters also. Putnam has, however, recorded a number of difficult births, and Mrs. Putnam witnessed various measures taken to overcome complications. On one occasion a Pygmy woman was in labor for 36 hours in a village. Villager and Pygmy women came and tried their own individual remedies, including filling the ears and

[P. 213-B]

1; Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]
[P. 213-C]

nose with leaves (Pygmy), making slight cuts on the stomach, arms, and knees and rubbing in herbal medicines (villager), and rubbing the stomach with cold water (both Pygmy and villager). While these activities were going on, children were playing about and running in and out of the hut where the pregnant woman was kept. Finally, the woman in labor, who, though in great pain, had never uttered a word of complaint was made to sit on a log, while one woman sat behind her and held her up, and another in front massaged the infant out. During the whole period of labor the woman's father and her husband were with her constantly. It was agreed that her difficulties resulted from her having broken a food taboo and eaten the flesh of an anteater.[1]

Another aid used by the Pygmy woman during childbirth is described by Anne Putnam (1954, 165). The girl in labor is given one end of a liana to hold; the other end is tied to a tree. Each time the pains start, the girl pulls on the liana as her friends massage her stomach.

845 [177]

[843]

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1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

looks after the boys as soon as they are old enough to join him on the hunt. Fostering and adoption may also take place if a mother is without milk, or if one woman is childless and a baby is born to a friend or relative who already has a large family.

Twins

There is no information available, except that twins have been born and survived, and that the phenomenon of Siamese twins is known. It is believed that to separate them is to kill them.

Postnatal Care and Adolescence

As with the archers, infants among net hunters are given every care and attention. They are breast-fed until after they can walk and talk. It seems, however, that mothers of this group are much more prone than the archer women to leave their children with sisters or close friends for short periods. A great deal of freedom is allowed the infant when it begins to crawl, and it may well be playing with sharp knives, bows and arrows, and trying to climb trees before it can walk. When a camp is moved, an infant is carried either on the hip of its mother or older sister or in a hide sling (Fig. 44) across the hip.

The children, as they grow older, tend to play together, frequently away from the camp.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

juice that when cut they have to be bent, with both ends upward so that the liquid will not be lost. Sometimes they are cut into chunks and soaked in water that is used for washing the infant.

A third precaution that is taken is to tie a vine bracelet around one of the infant's wrists, or around his waist. A small piece of wood may be roughly threaded to the vine, and the stated function is again to give the infant strength, except that with specific reference to the wood, it is frequently said that it "gives the child the strength of the forest."

With regard to preferences among the women as to where they give birth, it varies. But there is unanimity that if there is any difficulty at all, then the right thing to do is to go off away from the camp and into the forest, which will "help." The forest appears quite clearly as helper and protector in the vine and wooden medicines and charms, and in the scarification that will take place at the first sign of sickness. Even with adults this is done: the skin is cut in a number of small slits with an arrow, and some of the flesh is gouged out. The ashes prepared from forest woods and plants are made into a paste with spittle and rubbed into the wounds. When the skin grows back, the black ash is still visible beneath, and is regarded as a source of the strength and health and happiness that derive from the forest.

Both parents are under food restrictions until the baby is old enough to crawl, the main one and the only general one being that they must not eat meat. The father may go hunting, but any meat that falls into his net is divided among the others. More often he stays away from the hunt, sending his net out with some youth. However, somewhere between one and two months after birth, and when the family net has made a particularly successful catch, the father will usually announce that he is eating meat again.

The only other restriction placed on the nuclear family by the crisis of birth is the restraint placed on the father, who is forbidden to have sexual intercourse with the mother as long as she is breast-feeding the child. The restriction is quite definitely linked by the Mbuti to the supply of milk, which is also given as the reason for their rather mild aversion to twins. I know of no record of twins who both survived into adulthood, and it is stated that one of them invariably dies. It is also stated that no woman would feed a child at each breast, and I understand that if twins are born, one is simply not fed by the mother, and is taken away and buried by her friends. But there is no fear of twins, and no ritual in connection with their birth or death.